

Documents on Diplomacy: Lessons

The Agony and the Ecstasy

Standard:

- I. Culture
- III. People, Places, and Environments
- V. Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Grade Level: 9-12 (*Note: Analysis, evaluation, synthesis*)

Objectives:

The student will:

- Feel through music the struggle that Jefferson had between the theory of government and the reality of events
- Explain all the circumstances that led to the surprise purchase of all of Louisiana Territory
- Identify the conflicts that Jefferson faced
- Find examples of "Jefferson's struggles" through selected film clips
- Explain on a synthesis level how other examples of people in history faced similar situations to those experienced by Jefferson

Time: 3 class periods

Materials:

Documents: **1801** Jefferson's First Inaugural Message
1803 Jefferson's Third Message to Congress
1803 Louisiana Purchase Treaty

Exercises: *The LOUISIANA Purchase*
Jefferson's Thinking Document

Resources: *Information on the Louisiana Purchase*

Sound track from the 1965 film, *The Agony and the Ecstasy*, at 2:50 minutes
(available on itunes)

Copy of the *VideoHound's Golden Movie Retriever* reference book for film clips
OR access to www.movie retriever.com

Chart paper or a flip chart for recording information

Procedures:

Setting the Stage

During his presidency, Thomas Jefferson faced many situations in which he had to compromise between his ideal of Republican government and the realities of governing. His "agony" over those compromises shows up in his speeches and journals. But acquiring the entire Louisiana Purchase for a mere 3 cents per acre had to provide some sense of "ecstasy" as it had always been a dream of his father's to explore the western lands and find a route to the Pacific Ocean.

Throughout history, other thinkers, leaders, and artists have faced similar situations of the compromise of their ideals for the reality of achievement. A good example of such a dilemma would be Michelangelo's clashes with his patron, the Pope, and the beauty of the finished Sistine Chapel, depicted in the movie, *The Agony and Ecstasy*. In this lesson, students will be asked to find examples of similar struggles in film clips.

Procedures: Day One

- 1.** Hand out *Jefferson's First Inaugural Address* along with the exercise, *Jefferson's Thoughts on Role of Government*. Ask students to fill in the ideals about government that Jefferson stated in his inaugural address.
- 2.** While they are working play the sound track musical piece from *The Agony and the Ecstasy*.
- 3.** Discuss as a whole group the ideals the students have listed for Jefferson and how he had to compromise those ideals to match the reality of the times. Ask them to find film clips that show historical examples in which people have had to compromise their ideals for the events that made their times. (You could use a film segment from *The Agony and Ecstasy* as an example; another example could be a clip from *Excalibur* with King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.)

This is the time to introduce the *Video Hound's Golden Movie Retriever* reference book or www.movie retriever.com for students to find appropriate examples and determine who might have that movie at home. (Note: They can work in groups to plan what to bring to class.)

- 4.** Explain that at the next class each group will present a brief film clip that they have chosen and, before showing the clip, explain how they think it fits a similar dilemma to that faced by Jefferson.

Have the group prepare a flip chart (or draw it on the front board) to record the movie clips and message represented for use during the next class session.

- 5.** Give groups time to research and plan their presentation strategy.

Procedures Day Two: Film Day

- 1.** Review the procedures for sharing the film clips (of course appropriate for the classroom) and begin showing the film clips. Depending on the size of the groups, there should be enough time to present five or six.
- 2.** After viewing a clip, the whole group should discuss it. How does it depict the "agony" that Jefferson faced when his ideals were in conflict with international situations he had to face as President.
- 3.** Rate each film 1–10 (best) as a group of the whole and decide which film clip overall best fit the criteria. Record this on the chart. Keep the chart posted and use a question on the next test related to the dilemmas of the third president and results of student analysis and synthesis.

Procedures: Day Three

1. Hand out *Jefferson's Third Message to Congress*, the *LOUISIANA Purchase Graphic*, the *Transfer of the Louisiana Purchase Information Sheet*, and the *Louisiana Purchase Treaty*.

Have students research texts and the internet to explain how each entry listed on the graphic was part of a series of complex events that led to the surprise purchase of all of Louisiana. (Notice sheet spells LOUISIANA vertically)

2. These papers will be handed in after a discussion of each event. ■